

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
4 October 1984

FBI: Agent sold secrets to Soviets

By Murray Dubin
Inquirer Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES — An FBI agent here has been arrested and charged with selling intelligence secrets to two agents of the Soviet KGB, FBI Director William H. Webster announced yesterday. It is the first time that an FBI agent has been charged with espionage.

Richard T. Bretzing, special agent in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles office, told a news conference yesterday that "we have to conclude that U.S. intelligence techniques ... certain objectives, activities we have been involved in, have been compromised."

"The damage done is being assessed at this time."

Held without bond and scheduled for arraignment today was Richard W. Miller, 47, a 20-year veteran of the FBI who has been working in the agency's counterintelligence unit for the past three years.

Miller was arrested at 11:30 p.m. Tuesday in his weekend home in San Diego, Bretzing said. He had been fired from his job earlier in the day.

Arrested at midnight Tuesday at their home in Los Angeles were Soviet emigres Nikolay Ogorodnikov, 51, a butcher, and his wife Svetlana Ogorodnikova, 34, a nurse. Both have been in this country since 1973, the FBI said.

They were arraigned here yesterday before U.S. Magistrate Volney V. Brown Jr. and ordered held without bail pending a preliminary hearing Oct. 15.

"This is a most serious matter, involving a special agent alleged to have committed a crime against the U.S.," Webster said in Washington. "It is an aberration on the proud record of patriotic and dedicated service of thousands of special agents throughout our history."

Attorney General William French Smith said of Miller's arrest: "Every now and then a rotten apple will show up."

Miller and the Ogorodnikovs were arrested by FBI agents and charged with conspiracy to provide national defense information to a foreign government. If they are convicted, the maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

Bretzing said Miller became involved with the Soviet couple "because he had some financial problems. To our knowledge, he was motivated by money."

According to an FBI affidavit filed in federal court to obtain approval for search and arrest warrants, Miller sought \$50,000 in gold to put in three safety deposit boxes and \$15,000 in cash in return for removing classified FBI documents and giving them to the Ogorodnikovs. The document did not indicate whether Miller had ever received any money from the Soviet couple.

Miller was first approached by Ogorodnikova in late May, at which time he told her of his "personal, professional and financial problems," according to the affidavit, which was signed by P. Bryce Christensen, assistant special agent in charge of the Foreign Counterintelligence office in Los Angeles.

Christensen said that the affidavit was based upon interviews FBI agents conducted with Miller and the Soviet couple in the last week, as well as surveillances, a wiretap of the Ogorodnikovs' telephone and a search of Miller's home. Miller was also given a lie-detector test Sunday, according to the affidavit.

Miller, who has eight children and who was described by one FBI spokesman as "a family man who never went out drinking after hours," was asked by the Soviet woman on Aug. 12 to provide her FBI documents, the affidavit stated.

During the second or third week of August, the affidavit stated, Miller gave her a copy of a secret FBI document titled "Reporting Guidance: Foreign Intelligence Information." It was dated March 15, 1983.

"Discovery of this document would give the KGB a detailed picture of FBI and U.S. intelligence activities, techniques and requirements," Christensen stated in the affidavit.

Miller told FBI agents that he believed that the document was given to officials at the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco, the affidavit stated.

The affidavit further stated that Miller gave the Soviet woman at least one other classified document.

The affidavit said that Ogorodnikova, in an FBI interview, described her husband, also known as Nikolay Wolfson, as "having 30 years experience in handling financial matters for the 'network,' and who authorized to pay Miller for his cooperation." The affidavit states that the couple are "both covert agents of the KGB."

Miller and the Ogorodnikovs were planning a trip to Vienna next Wednesday, the affidavit stated.

The document stated that the FBI, in its search of Miller's home, found a number of classified documents stamped "secret" dating back to 1980. Some of the documents pertained to the FBI's investigation of the Soviet woman.

Prior to the press conference here yesterday, FBI spokesman John Hoos said, "This is a very emotional time for all of us."

Asked how he felt personally, Bretzing said that he had "no personal feelings that I care to discuss."

U.S. Attorney Robert Bonner for the Central District of California said yesterday that he expected a Grand Jury to return indictments against Miller and the Soviet couple sometime next week.

The Ogorodnikovs were well-known in the Los Angeles-Soviet emigre community for their pro-Soviet views, said Alexander Polovets, the publisher of the Soviet weekly Panorama, which is distributed throughout the United States.

Polovets, in an interview, said that the couple openly distributed pro-Soviet magazines and showed pro-Soviet movies.

They also collected money from Soviet emigrants, ostensibly to help relatives imprisoned in the Soviet Union.

"I wouldn't say that they were very smart people. I'd be surprised if they really worked for the KGB," he said.

Bretzing would not say how the FBI came to investigate Miller, but he did say that agents had long been aware of the activities of the Soviet woman.